

THE LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR

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The Livestock Protection Collar (LP Collar or toxic collar) is a registered method for killing coyotes that prey on sheep and goats. Collars are placed on livestock that are pastured where coyotes are likely to attack. Coyotes usually puncture the collars and are poisoned. This bulletin tells how collars are used and what restrictions apply.

DESCRIPTION AND USE

LP Collars are presently available in only one size - small, for lambs and kids up to 50 pounds. (A large collar may be available for future use but it is currently not registered by EPA - for animals over 50 pounds.) Each collar consists of a rubber bladder (2 compartments) with velcro or elastic neck straps. Each collar holds up to 30 milliliters (small collar) of Compound 1080 solution. One small collar contains up to 300 milligrams of 1080.

LP Collars deliver toxic liquid to coyotes that attack collared sheep or goats and bite into the collars. Collars do not attract coyotes, but because of their design and position on the throat where coyotes normally attack, most attacking coyotes will puncture them. LP Collars are ineffective against any predator that does not attack the throat. The collar is registered only for use against coyotes, and may be placed only on sheep or goats.

When collars are used properly, coyotes will puncture them in about 75 percent of attacks on collared sheep and goats. A 100 percent puncture rate cannot be expected because coyotes sometimes attack body sites other than the throat. Based on results of 15 pen tests, every coyote that punctures a 1080 collar will die. Attacking coyotes usually kill and feed on collared animals just as they would on uncollared livestock. With 1080, coyotes die 2 to 7 hours after puncturing the collars. Most poisoned coyotes are not found - they may travel up to 2 1/2 miles or more away from the point of attack before they die.

The LP Collar is only one of many techniques for protecting livestock from predators. Most predator control experts regard the collar as a supplement to other methods and not a replacement for them. In general, livestock producers should consider all methods, both lethal and nonlethal, and use collars only where cheaper or easier techniques prove impractical or ineffective. LP Collars are particularly useful against coyotes that kill repeatedly in a specific pasture, and that have eluded other controls such as fence, guard dogs, traps, snares, M-44 (sodium cyanide) or aerial hunting.

The LP Collar is as much a livestock husbandry practice as it is a lethal coyote control method. Collar use requires that coyote attacks be targeted to collared livestock. Targeting usually involves placing a "target" flock (50 to 100 animals of which 20 to 50 have collars) in a high-risk pasture while other sheep and goats in the vicinity are moved away or penned at night. Use of less than 10 collars per target flock is not advised.

Each rancher considering the use of collars should decide whether or not effective targeting can be achieved in his or her operation. In research studies where the collar technique appeared to have been ineffective, the common cause of failure was poor or ineffective targeting. Frequently, effective targeting could not be planned because coyotes did not attack consistently enough. On most ranches, only a high frequency of predation (at least 1 attack per week) will justify spending the time and money needed to become trained and certified to use the collars. Persons who are experienced with this technique usually can evaluate local conditions quickly and decide whether or not collars will be useful. Collar targeting techniques are in their infancy, and the ability of ranchers to use this tool is expected to improve with experience.

One advantage to the LP Collar is its selectivity for individual coyotes that are causing damage. Disadvantages include the cost of collars (approximately \$20 each) and livestock that must be sacrificed, hazards inherent in the use of this toxic pesticide, and the costs or inconvenience of complying with use restrictions including requirements for training, cer-

tification, and record keeping.

Training and certification for use of the LP Collar is be conducted by the Montana Department of Agriculture. Sale and distribution of the collars is be through the Montana Department of Livestock.

The use of LP Collars is subject to 18 use restrictions that are detailed in the EPA approved technical bulletin and label. Persons considering the use of collars should determine if they can comply with these restrictions before investing time and money into training and materials.

HISTORY AND REGISTRATION STATUS

The LP Collar was invented by Roy McBride (Ranchers Supply, Alpine, Texas) and patented in his name by the U.S. Government in 1974. After years of research and development, the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service applied in 1981 for EPA registration of the Compound 1080 Livestock Protection Collar. EPA granted registration in July 1985. Several western states including Montana, New Mexico, Texas and Wyoming have applied for and received registrations for use.

LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLARS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following questions and answers should be helpful to livestock producers who may be interested in using LP Collars.

Q. Who can use LP Collars?

A. Collars may be used only by certified Livestock Protection Collar applicators or persons under their direct supervision.

Q. As a rancher, how can I become certified to use collars?

A. You will take a one day training course following by a written examination. Training, certification and licensing will be handled by the Montana Department of Agriculture.

Q. Are there a licensing or training fees?

A. There is a \$50.00 licensing fee for private (farm) applicators for a 5 year license and a \$75.00 licensing fee per year for commercial applicators. A training fee will be collected for cost of instructional materials.

Q. Once I have been certified, where do I get the collars?

A. LP Collars will be sold and distributed solely by the Montana Department of Livestock.

Q. How much do collars cost?

A. The manufacturer's price for collars is approximately \$20.00. Prices paid by ranchers may be somewhat more to cover costs of shipping and handling.

Q. How long do collars last?

A. Up to 2 years, perhaps longer, unless punctured sooner. Once punctured or ruptured, collars must be disposed of by burial.

Q. Will the collars freeze?

A. Collars on unshorn sheep in Idaho did not freeze at temperatures as cold as 0°F. Collars stored in unheated building will freeze, and the effects of freezing on collars and their contents have not been studied.

Q. What records will collar users have to keep?

A. Required records include:

- numbers of collars attached on livestock
- The pasture(s) where collared livestock were placed
- dates of each collar attachment, inspection, and removal
- numbers and locations of livestock found with ruptured or punctured collars
- numbers, dates, and approximate location of collars lost
- species, locations and dates of all suspected poisoning of humans, domestic animals, or nontarget

wild animals resulting from collar use

Q. How often must collared livestock be inspected?

A. All collared livestock must be checked at least once every 7 days, and collars adjusted if needed.

Q. What if collared animals are missing?

A. Each collared animal will be marked to permit individual identification (probably by numbered ear tags). If any collared animal is missing on 2 consecutive checks, an intensive search for it must be made. In addition, if more than 3 collared animals are missing at any check, an intensive search for these is required.

Q. Where can LP Collars be used?

A. Collars can be used only in fenced pastures up to 2,560 acres in size (up to 10,000 acres under certain conditions). Collars cannot be used on unfenced, open range, or in any pasture where the applicator cannot monitor them properly.

Q. What other use restrictions must I consider?

A. The complete list of 18 restrictions is given in the EPA approved technical bulletin. Some important restrictions are:

- warning signs must be posted
- damaged collars must be disposed of by burial
- when not in use, collars must be stored under lock and key
- no more than 20 collars can be used in any 100 acre pasture, no more than 50 collars in any pasture between 100 to 640 acres in size
- no contaminated animal will be used for food or feed

Q. What provisions have been made to protect endangered wildlife?

A. Annual written approval from FWS Endangered Species Office is required before collars are used in certain areas where black-footed ferret, northern rocky mountain wolf or grizzly bears may be present. Any poisoning of threatened or endangered species must be reported.

Q. Can I put LP Collars on calves?

A. No. They may be used only on sheep or goats.

Q. Will LP Collars work on my ranch?

A. Collars will work wherever you can get coyotes to attack collared sheep or goats. It isn't feasible to collar all livestock on most ranches, so a "targeting" strategy must be used. Targeting consists of placing a target flock (50 to 100 head, of which 20 to 50 have collars) where coyotes will attack them. Successful targeting usually requires that uncollared sheep and goats be moved away from the trouble zone or penned at night, so that only the target flock is available to coyotes. If you can determine how to direct coyotes to a target flock on your ranch, you probably can use collars effectively. Use of less than 10 collars per target flock is not advised and will most likely lead to failure in controlling predation.

Q. What other factors should I consider in deciding whether or not to use LP Collars?

A. You should be positive that your predation problem is caused by coyotes, rather than some other species of predator. Collars are not recommended and are not legal for use against any other species. Each ranch should employ whatever combination of lethal and nonlethal controls is most effective. If other methods are doing the job, collars aren't recommended. Ranchers most likely to benefit from collar use are those who:

1. have at least 1 coyote kill each week.
2. haven't been able to stop the predation by other methods.
3. have fences and management conditions that will permit effective targeting of coyotes to collared sheep or goats.

Q. Why is Compound 1080 used in LP Collars? Why not some other toxicant?

A. Many other toxicants were tried experimentally - the list includes sodium cyanide, diphacinone, methomyl, carbofuran, and ethylene glycol. Of all chemicals tested, Compound 1080 was best in terms of effectiveness, safety, and least hazard to humans and nontarget animals.

Q. How dangerous are LP Collars to humans?

A. Each collar contains enough toxicant to kill several adult persons , but collar contents are not toxic unless taken internally. A person could be poisoned only by deliberately swallowing liquid from a collar. Experienced users consider LP Collars to be very safe, compared to ordinary farm hazards such as are inherent in using motor vehicles or farm machinery.

Q. Are LP Collars hazardous to livestock

A. An adult sheep could be fatally poisoned by eating forage contaminated with as little as 1 milliliter (1 cc) of collar contents. However, no such fatalities were seen during 5 years of experimental use. Collar use restrictions include provision for disposal of contaminated forage.

Q. Are LP Collars hazardous to stock dogs?

A. If your dog punctures a collar by biting at the neck of a collared sheep or goat, it probably would be poisoned. Otherwise, the hazard appears to be minimal. No rancher participating in experimental testing of LP Collars reported problems, either with herding dogs or guard dogs. Dogs should not be allowed to scavenge contaminated livestock carcasses, or to roam at large where they are likely to attack collared livestock.

Q. What is the future of the LP Collar?

A. The collar is just now reaching the point where it can succeed or fail on its own merits. The future

of this technique will be established by the collective experience of collar users. If a substantial number of ranchers find the collar superior to other methods where coyote damage control is difficult, the collar will be a success. But if most users have poor results, the collar will fall by the wayside. The important thing is to give it a fair trial.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON:

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